

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 3064

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Children & Family Services

**Title:** An act relating to eligibility for services to children and pregnant women.

**Brief Description:** Concerning eligibility for services to children and pregnant women.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Bailey, Morrell, Dunn, Kilmer, Strow, Green, Skinner, Hinkle, Kretz, Orcutt, Anderson, Darneille, Rodne, Woods, Talcott, Santos and McCune.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Children & Family Services: 1/30/06, 2/1/06 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Excludes the military basic allowance for housing from the definition of income when determining eligibility for medical assistance to pregnant women and their infants.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Dickerson, Dunn, Haler and Pettigrew.

**Staff:** Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

**Background:**

*Eligibility for Maternity Support Services*

Maternity support services offer low-income mothers counseling and education regarding breast feeding, nutrition, and prenatal, postpartum, and newborn development. Many services are delivered through a public health nurse home-visiting model and are provided through social service agencies and community action agencies.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) adopts rules for determining what resources are counted as income for purpose of eligibility for medical programs for children and pregnant women. Under those rules, money received from other agencies that is provided for reasons other than on-going living expenses is not counted as income. On-going living expenses include expenses for shelter, such as housing allowances.

### Military Basic Allowance for Housing

Persons who serve in the military may receive a military basic allowance for housing (BAH) when government housing is not provided. The allowance was instituted following the privatization of military housing and is intended to assist members of the military who do not live in government housing with obtaining commercial housing. The BAH, like the various other military allowances provided for specific needs, is not taxable. Under federal law, the BAH also can not be counted when determining a family's eligibility for free and reduced priced meals for school children.

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#### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The DSHS may not count the military BAH as income when determining eligibility for medical assistance to pregnant women and their infants.

#### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

Technical corrections are made so that the language is consistent with eligibility determinations for medicaid-funded maternity support services. The phrase *children and pregnant women* is replaced with *pregnant women and their infants*, and the term *medical assistance* replaces *maternity support services*.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** When military housing became privatized there was a corresponding basic allowance for housing (BAH) that began showing up on employees' paychecks. Previously, when families received government housing instead of the BAH, many families' income was low enough to qualify for maternity support services. Since the BAH is now included in the military paychecks, it prevents some low-income families from qualifying for much-needed maternity support services.

This bill is about addressing the unintended consequences of the BAH. It proposes we continue doing what we've always done, and that is to provide low-income women and their infants with maternity support services when those services are not provided through their military health care benefits.

**Testimony Against:** The best way to help and protect pregnant women and children is to replace military bases with schools.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Bailey, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Yoshe Revelle.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.